

4E – Community Well-Being



COMMUNITY WELL-BEING



Commented [KK1]: Ditto with this chapter as will Noise and Economic Development. This chapter doesn't really address Coastal Act issues, and is mostly written as goals/programs for the City to undertake as opposed to regulating new development.

print

Cities exist for the primary purpose of ensuring the well-being of the people who live, work, and visit them. The availability of housing, transportation options, healthy food, open space, and economic stability affects the physical, social, and mental well-being of the people in the community. Residents greatly value the quality of life offered in Morro Bay, and visitors, whether employees or tourists, also benefit from it. The City will remain focused on ensuring the greatest livability possible for people of every age, race, ability, and socioeconomic group.

OVERVIEW

Scope and Content

The Community Well-Being Element addresses the social aspects of community design. It anticipates the ways in which the built environment affects the overall well-being of residents and visitors and allows needs to be met easily and affordably. A person's social, physical, and mental well-being are inexorably linked, and this element touches on all three aspects and includes policies to improve the conditions that influence them. Community well-being goals and policies address quality of life, community health, and the anticipated health effects of climate change. Where data specific to Morro Bay is not available, estimates based on data for San Luis Obispo County are used to show trends in health and well-being for Morro Bay residents, along with input from local residents and staff.

Relationship to Other Elements

The Community Well-Being Element is connected to all other elements in *Plan Morro Bay*, as all parts of the plan work together to create a healthy and vibrant environment. Specifically, the Land Use and Circulation elements heavily influence resident activity levels and physical health, contribute to food and medical service accessibility, promote employment and housing stability, and establish locations for recreation and open space. The Conservation and Open Space elements establish policies that ensure residents and visitors have access to attractive natural areas and recreation, prioritize clean energy

options, and preserve the clean air and water residents need to stay healthy. The Noise, Community Design, and Public Safety elements focus on ensuring Morro Bay is a pleasant and safe place, which affects the likelihood of people to be active by walking, biking, and generally enjoying the community.

RESILIENCY APPROACH

The concept of resiliency describes a community's ability to respond to and recover from challenges it faces. The social resiliency of a population enables people to work together to cope, respond, and learn from an environmental, economic, or social threat. To best do so, people must have their basic needs met and must feel connected and involved in the community. This element complements the Morro Bay Climate Action Plan by ensuring the community has a strong base that is able to recover from the natural disasters and economic changes caused by climate change impacts. Policies focus on ensuring that Morro Bay remains a diverse and inclusive community with strong social capital and a connected, resilient population.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Morro Bay residents tend to be healthier than the average Californian. San Luis Obispo County as a whole is ranked highly for general health, quality of life, health behaviors, and clinical care. Like most of California, however, chronic disease and cancer continue to be the primary causes of death for residents, and obesity, lack of physical activity and fresh food, and mental health concerns are common issues. A combination of the physical environment, socioeconomic conditions, and personal behaviors contribute to these issues and can be improved through conscious planning and community improvement.

The demographic makeup of Morro Bay also requires consideration, as the relatively high number of residents over age 50 can have specific health concerns. Access to quality health care, food, and services, and the ability to respond to disasters become more important and less available as individuals age. Isolation and a lack of community involvement are also common and substantially detract from quality of life for both individuals and the community as a whole.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Socioeconomic factors are among the best determinants for health and well-being in a person or community. Income level, housing quality, and employment status can dramatically affect a person's ability to care for their well-being and contribute to society in a meaningful way.

Morro Bay does not have any officially designated disadvantaged communities as described in state planning law, and the levels of both educational attainment and employment are higher in Morro Bay than in most of California. However, the median income is lower than the state average and more than half of residents pay at least 30 percent of their income toward housing. A strong household income, employment base, and education level will provide Morro Bay residents with the means to care for themselves and enjoy a high quality of life.

KEY ISSUES

Environmental Equity

Planning and land use decisions have the capacity to dramatically affect the lives of residents, with low-income and minority groups often the ones most impacted by air pollution, hazardous waste, and other undesirable or even dangerous environmental issues. In 2016, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000) requiring cities and counties to address the environmental equity concerns of any designated disadvantaged communities in the general plan. Morro Bay does not contain areas with significant environmental equity concerns, but the City will always consider the equity impacts of planning decisions, particularly while preparing neighborhoods and the city as a whole for the effects of climate change, including becoming more prone to flooding, landslides, and extreme heat events.

Quality of Life

The quality of life in a community involves a wide variety of economic and social factors. While measuring many of these factors directly is possible, a simpler way to evaluate a community's quality of life is by focusing on key indicators, including commute times to work, population turnover, housing costs, and crime rates. By identifying what drives these indicators and improving upon them, Morro Bay can continue to provide a high standard of living.

Table CW-1 lists the key indicators used to measure quality of life for Morro Bay residents. In general, Morro Bay residents are better off than or on par with residents throughout the state for each indicator; however, improving these indicators would positively affect the lives of the city's residents and increase their ability to achieve financial and social success and stability.

**Table CW-1:
Quality of Life Indicators (2014)**

| | Morro Bay | California |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Average Commute Time (minutes) | 18.8 | 27.6 |
| Percentage Commuting 30 or More Minutes per Day | 27% | 40% |
| Population Turnover | | |
| Same House One Year Ago | 82% | 86% |
| Different House One Year Ago | 18% | 14% |
| Median Household Income | \$50,914 | \$61,818 |
| Housing Cost 30 Percent or More of Income | | |
| Extremely Low Income | 86% | Not available |
| Very Low Income | 55% | Not available |
| Crime Rates per 100,000 Residents | | |
| Violent | 487 | 393 |
| Property | 2,282 | 3,459 |

Source: US Census Bureau 2014; California Department of Justice, 2014 Crime in California Report and CJSC Statistics Crimes and Clearances Database; California Association of Realtors 2015

The shorter commute times and slightly lower population turnover in Morro Bay can significantly improve quality of life, although the crime rate is marginally higher than the state average. The impact of housing costs on low-income residents, including seniors, has severe consequences on living stability and available income for other needs.

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL CW-1: Morro Bay residents enjoy a high quality of life that contributes to their mental, physical, and social well-being.

POLICY CW-1.1: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.

Improve safety and the perception of safety by using the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), including use of adequate lighting, street visibility, and defensible space.

POLICY CW-1.2: Family Enrichment Programs. Partner with the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department, local nonprofits, and schools to provide child and family enrichment programs and after-school educational programs that emphasize intellectual and emotional preparation, particularly in underserved communities.

POLICY CW-1.3: Services for All. Ensure the accessibility of facilities and services that meet the cultural, linguistic, gender, and sexual orientation needs of client populations.

POLICY CW-1.4: Community Equity Training. Provide training and tools to public staff to advance equity and social justice across all areas of service. Promote similar training and awareness throughout local and regional government.

Diverse, Multigenerational Community

Morro Bay has many residents who span older and younger generations and have specific needs and desires for their community. The community welcomes people from all generations, backgrounds, and lifestyles, and the City seeks to provide for that diversity.

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL CW-2: Morro Bay residents of all ages, cultures, and lifestyles enjoy a community that is inclusive, enjoyable, and meets all physical, emotional, and mental needs.

POLICY CW-2.1: Health Service Awareness. Partner with the County Public Health Department and local clinics and hospitals to promote public awareness of health and social services available in the area.

POLICY CW-2.2: Preserve Diversity. Protect and enhance the individuality and diversity of the community.

POLICY CW-2.3: Community Involvement. Promote and provide a variety of ways residents and visitors can be involved and connected to the community.

POLICY CW-2.4: Multigenerational Housing. Provide for multigenerational living spaces including housing for single parents, young families, and seniors, including aging-in-place communities.

POLICY CW-2.5: Public Accessibility. Improve the accessibility of public spaces.

POLICY CW-2.6: Home Care Options. Increase the availability of home care and assisted living opportunities for older and disabled adults.

Chronic Disease

Chronic disease is one of the leading health concerns in the country, and it represents a significant cause of death for Morro Bay residents. The primary concerns for residents in Morro Bay are obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and asthma, with heart disease the leading cause of death for San Luis Obispo County residents after cancer.

Many chronic diseases can be reduced or managed through proper diet, activity levels, and protection from environmental hazards such as air pollution. Morro Bay residents have many opportunities for an active lifestyle, including a highly walkable community and access to outdoor recreation. Access to healthy, fresh food in the city is low, however, and could be improved by providing for and incentivizing more opportunities for residential gardening, produce markets, healthy corner stores, a range of restaurant options, and full-service grocers.

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL CW-3: Residents and visitors in Morro Bay are healthy and have access to essential services.

POLICY CW-3.1: Education Programming. Partner with local agencies and organizations to offer health education programs and organized activities for residents and visitors.

POLICY CW-3.2: Food Access. Promote the availability of fresh food throughout the city, both at retail locations and in restaurants.

POLICY CW-3.3: Local Food. Support additional local and sustainable food providers such as farmers markets, community gardens, and urban agriculture.

POLICY CW-3.4: Healthy Consumer Options. Partner with the County Public Health Department to encourage stores and restaurants to offer affordable and healthy options.

POLICY CW-3.5: Medical Access. Ensure residents and visitors have convenient access to health and medical facilities.

Health Effects of Climate Change

The effects of climate change will intensify concerns for the well-being of the Morro Bay community. Increases in sea level, natural disasters, heat events, vector-borne disease, air pollution, and disruption to food and water distribution systems will exceed the capacity that most communities can handle. To prepare for these effects, Morro Bay needs a strong social structure and an established network of community partners working together to address health and social needs, economic weaknesses, and physical vulnerabilities. Particular attention to maintaining the needs of vulnerable populations such as seniors, pregnant women, children, the homeless, the mentally ill, people with chronic diseases, and outdoor workers will be critical to minimizing risk and disruption as these effects occur.

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL CW-4: Morro Bay recognizes and is prepared for increased health risks due to current and anticipated future climate change effects.

POLICY CW-4.1: Plan Updates. Recognize and address the health effects of climate change when updating local hazard mitigation plans, hazard emergency plans, specific plans, and other policies and ordinances.

POLICY CW-4.2: Vulnerable Populations. Identify populations more vulnerable to and exposed to potential health impacts. Develop targeted population-level mitigation and adaptation strategies, and prioritize the use of resources to benefit the most significantly impacted populations.

POLICY CW-4.3: Climate Change Response Plan. Prepare a response plan to be used in the implementation of Measure A-2 of the CAP to ensure the protection of vulnerable populations during times of high heat, extended drought, flooding, or other extreme weather events.

POLICY CW-4.4: Vectors and Infectious Diseases. Work with the County Public Health Department to monitor vector-borne and infectious diseases, such as West Nile virus and Lyme disease, reduce the

risks of these diseases, and better understand the disease effects of climate change.

POLICY CW-4.5: Public Awareness. Increase public understanding of the impacts of climate change on health and ways to prepare for such changes. This policy should be implemented together with Measures E-4, TL-1, and TL-3 of the CAP.

POLICY CW-4.6: Emergency Housing. Expand and plan for additional emergency, transitional, and supportive housing services provided by the City and community organizations to prepare for loss of housing and exposure of homeless populations during extreme weather events.

POLICY CW-4.7: Urban Greening. Maximize urban greening and the use of green infrastructure to minimize the urban heat island effect, maintain and improve water quality, and contribute to the physical and social health of community members. This policy should be implemented together with Measure A-4 of the CAP.